

**VRUEC Spring Meeting
May 23, 2006
State Library of Virginia**

Attendees

Cindy Duncan	Katie Register	Suzie Gilley
Bill Portlock	Lane Williams	Carol Zokaite
Carole Grove	Dana Roberts	Tamra Willis
Jeff Kirwan	Laurie Sorabella	Jill Bieri
Paula Klonowski	Virginia Witmer	Bob Carroll
Lisa Deaton	Tim Taglauer	Jennifer Buff
Jennifer Underwood	Rebecca Askew	Barry Fox
Nancy Drumheller	Ann Mallek	Ann Regn
Carol Hopper Brill	Michelle Prysby	
Bobbie Burton	Llyn Sharp	

The meeting convened at 1:25 p.m. The minutes from our winter meeting were accepted pending any changes emailed to Lisa in the next few days.

Treasurer's Report

Ann R. presented a spreadsheet report on the bank account with balances for the different projects funded by VRUEC. Carol Z. asked if there was currently money in the Classrooms Grant to support projects outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. If not, then we should not encourage teachers outside of the Bay to apply. Ann R. felt like there was opportunity to procure more funds from Smithfield Foods for projects outside the Bay watershed.

Ann R. introduced her summer intern, Dan Stone, who will assist with BWET grant tracking.

Headwaters Academy – 20 teachers are registered. There is room for two more.

14-15 teachers are registered for the Coastal Bay Academy. There has been great collaboration on building instructional staff from a diversity of partners. There is still room for several more to attend.

MWEE Professional Development Day

This event, originally scheduled for April at Camp Kitty in Northumberland County, was cancelled due to lack of enrollment. The lack of advance publicity did not help. We discussed different ways to convey the MWEE concept as part of other teacher professional development days or the EE Conference. Jill Bieri expressed a concern about the remote location given that the agenda started early in the day and ended late.

They were looking for a spot with access to brackish and freshwater and canoes. Perhaps we need to consider regional MWEE workshops. VRUEC has funds to support this type of training. Jennifer B. asked if there was a targeted audience. Suzie and Ann emphasized that invitations go out to as many people as possible, and everyone is encouraged to host a MWEE workshop as opportunities arise.

Building Capacity Grants

A dozen proposals were received. Proposals were due May 1. They were reviewed and awarded by Ann R. and Suzie.

NAAEE conference (North American Association of Environmental Educators)

Last fall, Brian Day, the Executive Director of NAAEE, had asked Virginia to host the 2007 annual conference. Suzie and Ann R. asked NAAEE to consider other states. Washington, DC considered hosting, but no hotels in the area were cheap enough. They encountered similar difficulties in Baltimore. NAAEE decided on Virginia Beach. The conference will be Nov. 13-17, 2007 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. We don't know what the degree of our involvement will be - field trips, hosting, presenting conference sessions. Research-based sessions are common. Smithsonian CRC has offered the same pre-conference session at the last two NAAEE conferences. Brian is interested in Virginia because of the way VRUEC operates. This might be a chance to highlight Virginia's unique EE structure.

The 2007 Virginia Association of Science Teachers Professional Development Institute will be just a few days before NAAEE: Nov. 8-10 in Williamsburg.

Other items of interest:

Lane Guillems encouraged everyone to attend the 70th anniversary events taking place June 15-18 at all State Parks. Y'all come. Ideas for Love a Tree Kit activities are also welcome. The theme is Historic Use of Resources – Then and Now, to include changes in ecosystems that have resulted from increased human activity.

The Virginia EE Conference will be Sept. 19-20 at the Skelton Conference Center (formerly known as the Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Center). There are 42 session proposals to review. The ballpark cost is \$110 for meals and lodging. On-line registration should be available on June 1. Nancy reviewed the list of session proposals with us. The conference will be zero-waste. Please encourage your colleagues to attend. There will also be a putt-putt golf tournament.

Water education program – Barry is looking for people to review his new program (interactive CD-ROM). They will be recording the macroinvertebrate soundtrack soon.

Marine Aquatic Science Camp will be Aug 20-25 at the Jamestown 4-H Center. They are reworking the content this year.

Jennifer Buff, Jennifer McD and Kris Jarvis are planning the Headwaters to the Bay workshop for teachers on June 26-30. This institute will start at the Smithsonian CRC in Front Royal, go to the Smithsonian research center on the Bay, and end in DC. There are lots of great topics. There is still room for about 12 more teachers.

The **Virginia's Water Resources** book will be reprinted – several dozen copies. Let Katie know if you know of schools and school libraries that are interested in obtaining a copy. It is already time to think about the upcoming International Coastal Cleanup in Sept. and Oct. Last year, over 4500 volunteers picked up over 200,000 pounds of trash, which revealed informative data.

Jill Bieri announced that Oct. 20 is the deadline for the next round of BWET grants. There should be \$2.1 – 2.5 million to award as long as budget is approved. There is a smaller pot of funds for Jamestown, John Smith and buoy trail -related proposals. Workshops will be held again on how to write the BWET grants in each state this year. One will be in the western part of Virginia. \$800,000 in grants were awarded to Virginia last year. 20 out of 50 proposals received were from Virginia, constituting the most proposals from any one Bay jurisdiction.

Jeff Kirwan – The Master Naturalist logo was chosen at our last VRUEC meeting. Michelle Prysby, Virginia's new Master Naturalist Coordinator, brought brochures to share and announced that the website is up and running. Ann R. mentioned that there is hope that local Master Naturalist chapters will be eager to partner with programs and projects at their local schools. Please email any ideas that should be considered by her Advisory Committee to Michelle.

Paula – The Learn and Serve Grants for the next three years will focus on environmental projects. The RFP will be out in a few months. Schools can apply, but local partners will be needed. The focus this year is middle and high school.

Katie – Longwood University's Hull Springs Farm in Westmoreland Co. will host a workshop on Living Shorelines for property owners on June 24. This is the first of hopefully hundreds of workshops.

Virginia Witmer mentioned that the Virginia CZM Program will be focusing on the issue of Living Shorelines over the next five years. A Living Shoreline Summit (VA, MD, NC participants) will be held on December 6 – 7 at the Williamsburg Hospitality House. One session will focus on educating the public about the value of Living Shorelines versus hardened shorelines and will highlight the use of social marketing. A Living Shoreline Guide for Landowners is in production and will be available in the fall. More about the Virginia CZM's Living Shoreline initiative and the Summit will be available on the Program's web site at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/coastal/>

Tamra announced that Betty Gatewood, a 7th grade life science teacher with Augusta County Schools, will be on staff at Mary Baldwin College to work with local schools

participating in the college's Environment-Based Learning Program. Reading on the River, a 3 hour graduate course, will be offered again this summer. In addition, MBC is sponsoring teachers (using NOAA funds) to take Chesapeake Classrooms.

Kris Jarvis is managing the special MWEE Classroom Grant Program, which targeted ten school divisions over the past year. The initial training took place at Wintergreen, where each school division planned how to include meaningful watershed educational experiences in their curriculum. If you have suggestions for counties that should participate this summer and coming school year, please contact Kris, Paula, or Eric. There is only \$6500 available per county, so somewhat rural, smaller school divisions with one or two middle/high schools would benefit the most. The school system needs to have an outside partner. The money can be used for transportation, substitute teachers, professional development, and lab equipment. The key components are that the project be included in the curriculum and have the approval of the participating principal.

Barry Fox shared that the curriculum components of the Water Wizard van are up for review. MAMEA is having its fall conference in North Bay, Maryland in September.

Next meeting(s):

- Suzie asked about the opening dates for the new additions to the Martinsville Museums as this location had been suggested for our winter meeting.
- There was a suggestion to take the cabinet secretaries on a MWEE for the May 2007 meeting.
- A few members wondered if we should have a brief VRUEC meeting at the EE Conference in September at the Skelton Conference Center since we will all be there.
- The 2007 EE Conference location was also discussed, and Lisa suggested that we not hold a 2007 Virginia EE Conference since we are hosting the NAAEE conference later that same fall.
- No decision was made about our next meeting date and location.

We adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Deaton
June 5, 2006
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